

Message Text

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LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV JA

SUBJ: TAKEO FUKUDA REVIEWS LDP PROSPECTS

SUMMARY: IN CANDID CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR FOR JAPANESE AFFAIRS WILLIAM SHERMAN MORNING JULY 23, TAKEO FUKUDA REVIEWED RATIONALE FOR RESIGNATION FROM TANAKA CABINET, AND COMMENTED ON PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE WITHIN LDP. KEY POINTS FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

1. FUKUDA BEGAN CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT LDP QTE DEFEAT UNQTE IN JULY 7 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION PROVED CONCLUSIVELY THAT PRIMIN TANAKA HAS LOST SUPPORT OF PEOPLE, MORE BECAUSE OF HIS QTE ARROGANT RELIANCE ON MONEY AND POWER UNQTE THAN BECAUSE OF ISSUES SUCH AS INFLATION. FUKUDA SAID THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO CONVINCE PRIMIN TANAKA AFTER ELECTION THAT CHANGE IN POLITICAL STYLE IS REQUIRED IN BEST INTERESTS OF LDP SO THAT ONLY CHOICE LEFT TO FUKUDA WAS TO RESIGN FROM CABINET AND WORK FOR BASIC CHANGES WITHIN PARTY.

2. FUKUDA SAID THAT QTE BY COINCIDENCE UNQTE HE FINDS HIMSELF SHARING SIMILAR POSITION WITH TAKEO MIKI, WHO RESIGNED FROM
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CABINET EARLIER TO WORK QTE FOR MODERNIZATION OF LDP UNQTE.

FUKUDA BELIEVES THAT DEEPER MOTIVATION FOR MIKI RESIGNATION STEMS FROM RESENTMENT AGAINST TANAKA FOR WORKING AGAINST MIKI'S SUPPORTERS DURING ELECTION.

3. FUKUDA SAID HE SEES NO SIGN OF CHANGE IN PRIMIN TANAKA POLITICAL ATTITUDE AND SAID FRANKLY THAT BEST INTERESTS OF PARTY REQUIRE HIS REPLACEMENT. IDEALLY, FUKUDA BELIEVES THAT TANAKA SHOULD RESIGN ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE TO SPARE PARTY DIVISIVE IN-FIGHTING. HOWEVER, HE THINKS THIS HIGHLY UNLIKELY AND EXPECTS TANAKA TO CONCENTRATE ON EXPANDING HIS OWN FACTIONAL STRENGTH FOR SHOW-DOWN IN NEXT YEAR'S PARTY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

3. FUKUDA FEELS THAT OPEN ALLIANCE WITH MIKI AT THIS STAGE WOULD PLAY INTO PRIMIN'S HANDS, SINCE IT WOULD PRESENT A TARGET FOR TANAKA TO CONCENTRATE ON AND WOULD REQUIRE PARTY MEMBERS TO TAKE SIDES PREMATURELY. INSTEAD, FUKUDA HOPES TO WAIT FOR BUILD-UP OF CONCERN ALREADY WIDESPREAD AMONG YOUNGER LDP DIET MEMBERS WHO ARE WORRIED ABOUT HOLDING THEIR SEATS IN A NEW ELECTION UNDER TANAKA LEADERSHIP. THIS CONCERN COULD DEVELOP INTO STRONG FEELING IN FAVOR OF PARTY REFORM, WHICH FUKUDA BELIEVES WOULD OFFER HIM REAL OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEAT TANAKA IN NEXT SUMMER'S PARTY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

4. FUKUDA SAID THAT ONE CERTAINTY WAS THAT NEXT PARTY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO PAST PRACTICE OF OPEN BUYING OF VOTES, SINCE THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT VOTERS FIND OBJECTIONABLE IN TANAKA STYLE.

5. NOTING THAT IT WOULD BE SIMPLE TO BRING DOWN TANAKA GOVERNMENT BY VOTING WITH OPPOSITION PARTIES IN DIET IN SUPPORT OF NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION THEY ARE SURE TO PRESENT, FUKUDA EMPHATICALLY RULED OUT THIS TACTIC, EXPLAINING THAT HIS PURPOSE (AND MIKI'S) IS TO REFORM PARTY INTERNALLY, NOT REMOVE IT FROM POWER.

6. FUKUDA EMPHASIZED THAT HE SUPPORTS CONTINUATION SINGLE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. HOWEVER, HE SAID, LDP SPLIT INTO TWO CONSERVATIVE PARTIES IS QUOTE POSSIBLE UNQUOTE, ALTHOUGH NOT QUOTE PROBABLE UNQUOTE. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT IF PRIMIN TANAKA REACTED TO FUKUDA-MIKI CALL FOR REFORM BY DISSOLVING DIET AND

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SCHEDULING NEW ELECTIONS, THEY WOULD BE FORCED TO LEAVE LDP AND QUOTE DEFEND THEMSELVES UNQUOTE. IN SUCH CONTINGENCY, FUKUDA ALLUDED TO POSSIBILITY OF QUOTE TEMPORARY ALLIANCE UNQUOTE OF QUOTE OUR GROUP UNQUOTE WITH MODERATE, RIGHT-WING FORCES WITHIN OPPOSITION PARTIES FOR ONE ELECTION. SUCH AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN, HE STATED FLATLY WOULD BE FOUGHT ON STRAIGHT GROUNDS OF MORALITY. HE WOULD QUOTE ADVISE THOSE WHO LOVE MONEY TO VOTE FOR TANAKA, AND THOSE WHO LOVE THE COUNTRY TO SUPPORT HIMSELF. UNQUOTE

7. THROUGHOUT, FUKUDA EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT BASIC INABILITY OF TANAKA GOVERNMENT TO RECOVER POPULAR SUPPORT SPELLS GRAVE DANGER OF OPPOSITION VICTORY IN NEXT ELECTION, WITH CONSEQUENT RISK OF REVERSAL OF ALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FREE SOCIETY ACHIEVED OVER PAST CENTURY, PARTICULARLY IN YEARS SINCE WAR.

8. FUKUDA NOTED THAT HIS (AND MIKI'S) DIFFERENCES WITH TANAKA DO NOT INVOLVE INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OR MATTERS OF BASIC POLICY, BUT ARE LIMITED TO POLITICAL STYLE AND MORALITY IN GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, LATER IN CONVERSATION, FUKUDA RECALLED THAT GRADUAL STABILIZATION OF PRICES HAD BEEN ACHIEVED UNDER HIS CONSERVATIVE ECONOMIC POLICIES AND EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PRIMIN TANAKA MIGHT RENEW INFLATIONARY PLANS TO BUILD MORE BULLET LINE RAILWAYS AND BRIDGES ACROSS INLAND SEA.

9. FUKUDA CONCEDED THAT POLITICA SITUATION MIGHT APPEAR TO BE UNSTABLE OVER COMING MONTHS BUT EXPRESSED CONFICENCE THAT MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM POLITICAL STABILITY WOULD BE ASSURED AND THAT REFORM COULD BE BROUGHT ABOUT.

9. COMMENT: FUKUDA APPEARED RELAXED AND FIT. IN HIS USUAL INCISIVE AND FRANK MANNER, HE STRESSED THE ABSOLUTE NEED FOR THE LDP TO IMPROVE ITS IMAGE IN ORDER TO RETAIN POWER OVER THE LONG HAUL. IT WAS APPARENT THAT HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF THE ONE TO DO THIS. ALTHOUGH HE CAUTIONED THAT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS, HE DID NOT SEEM OVERLY PESSIMISTIC.
END COMMENT.
HODGSON

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